

to understand the people of these United States.

As another instance of our regard for the finer and loftier aspects of life, consider our parks, set apart for the use of the people by the city, the State and the nation. In the cities of this new country the public playgrounds have had to be made, the most of them, and at high cost, whereas the towns of the old world have come into possession of theirs for nothing, more often than not, inheriting the private recreation grounds of their rulers. And Europe has nothing to show similar in kind either to the reservations of certain States, like the steadily enlarging preserves in the Catskills and the Adirondacks, or to the ampler national parks, the Yellowstone, the Yosemite and the Grand Cañon of the Colorado, some of them far larger in area than one at least of the original thirteen States. Overcoming the pressure of private greed, the people have ordained the preservation of this natural beauty and its protection for all time under the safe guardianship of the nation and with free access to all who may claim admission to enjoy it.

In like manner the battle-fields, whereon the nation spent its blood that it might be what it is and what it hopes to be—these have been taken over by the nation itself and set apart and kept as holy places of pilgrimage. They are free from the despoiling hand of any private owner. They are adorned with monuments recording the courage of the men who fought there. They serve as constant reminders of the duty we owe to the country and of the debt we owe to those who made it and who saved it for us. And the loyal veneration with which these fields of blood have been cherished here in the United States finds no parallel in any country in Europe, no matter how glorious may be its annals of military prowess. Even Waterloo is in private hands; and its fields, enriched by the bones of thousands, are tilled every year by the industrious Belgian farmers. Yet it was a Frenchman, Renan, who told us that what welds men into a nation is "the memory of great deeds done in common and the will to accomplish yet more."

According to the theory of the conservation of energy, there ought to be about as much virtue in the world at one time as at another. According to the theory of the survival of the fittest, there ought to be a little more now than there was a century ago. We Americans to-day have our faults, and they are abundant enough and blatant enough, and foreigners take care that we shall not overlook them; but our ethical standard—however imperfectly we may attain to it—is at least as high as that of the Greeks under Pericles, of the Romans under Caesar, of the English under Elizabeth. It is higher even than that of our forefathers who established our freedom, as those know best who have most carefully inquired into the inner history of the American Revolution. In nothing was our advance more striking than in the different treatment meted out to the vanquished after the Revolution and after the Civil War. When we had made our peace with the British the native Tories were proscribed and thousands of loyalists left the United States to carry into Canada the indurated hatred of the exiled. But after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, no body of men, no single man indeed, was driven forth to live an alien for the rest of his days; a few might choose to go, but none were compelled.

This change of feeling on the part of those who were victors in the struggle was evidence of an increasing sensitiveness, an increasing sympathy—which was the exciting cause of our rush to the relief of Cuba. Not only is sectionalism disappearing, but with it is departing the feeling that really underlies it—the distrust of those who dwell elsewhere than where we do. This distrust is still common all over Europe to-day. Here in America it has yielded to a friendly neighborliness which makes the family from Portland, Maine, soon feel itself at home in Portland, Oregon. It is getting hard for us to hate anybody—especially since we had disestablished the Devil. We are good-natured and easy-going. Herbert Spencer even denounced this as our immediate danger; he maintained that we were too good-natured, too easy-going, too tolerant of evil; and he insisted that we needed to stiffen our wills to protest against wrong and to grapple with it resolutely and to overcome before it is firmly rooted.

We are kindly and we are hopeful; and we are fixed in the belief that somehow everything will work out all right in the long run. But nothing will work

out all right unless we so make it work; and excessive optimism may be as corrupting to the fiber of the people as "the Sabbathless pursuit of fortune," as Bacon termed it. When John Morley was last in this country he seized swiftly upon a chance allusion to this ingrained hopefulness of ours. "Ah, what you call optimism," he cried, "I call fatalism!" But an optimism which is solidly based on a survey of the facts cannot fairly be termed fatalism.

And another British student of political science, James Bryce, has recently pointed out that the intelligent native American has—and is by experience justified in having—a firm conviction that the majority of qualified voters are pretty sure to be right. Then he suggested a reason for the faith that is in us when he declared that no such feeling exists in Europe, since in Germany the governing class dreads the spread of socialism, in France the Republicans know that it is not impossible that Monarchism and Clericalism may succeed in upsetting the Republic, while in Great Britain each party believes that the other party, when it succeeds, succeeds by misleading the people, and neither party supposes that the majority are any more likely to be right than to be wrong.

Mr. Morley and Mr. Bryce were both here in the United States in the fall of 1904, when we were in

the midst of a presidential election, one of those prolonged national debates, creating incessant turmoil, but invaluable agents of our political education, in so far as they force us all to take thought about the underlying principles of policy, by which we wish to see the Government guided. It was while this political campaign was at its height that the French visitor to the Russian novelist was setting his notes in order and copying out his assertion that the Americans were mere money-grubbers, predatory and barbaric.

If the unthinking Parisian journalist had only taken the trouble to consider the appeals which the chief speakers of the two parties here in the United States were making to their fellow-citizens in the hope of winning votes, he would have discovered that these practical politicians, trained to perceive the subtler shades of popular feeling, were founding all their arguments on the assumption that the American people as a whole wanted to do right. He would have seen that the appeal of these devoted partisans was never to prejudice or to race-hatred—evil spirits that various orators have sought to arouse and to intensify in the more recent political discussion of the French themselves.

An examination of the platforms, the letters of the candidates, and the speeches of the more important leaders on both sides revealed to an American observer the significant fact that "each party tried to demonstrate that it was more peaceable, more equitable, more sincerely devoted to lawful and righteous behavior than the other." In other words, "the voter was instinctively credited with loving peace and righteousness and with being stirred by sentiments of good-will toward men." This seems to show that the heart of the people is sound and that it does not throb in response to ignoble appeals. It seems to show that there is here the desire ever to do right and to see right done, even if the will is weakened a little by easy-going good-nature, even if the will fails at times to stiffen itself resolutely to make sure that the right does prevail, even if righteous wrath does not always blaze forth to destroy evil-doers.

"Liberty hath a sharp and double edge fit only to be handled by just and virtuous men," so Milton asserted long ago, adding that "to the bad and dissolute, it becomes a mischief, unwieldy in their own hands." Even if we clear ourselves of being "bad and dissolute," we have much to do before we can claim to be "just and virtuous." Justice and virtue are not to be had for the asking; they are the rewards of a manful contest with selfishness and with sloth. They are the result of a strenuous effort to think straight and to apply eternal principles to present needs. Merely to begin is only the beginning; what remains is to think and to act.

An English historian, Frederic Harrison, who came here to spy out the land three or four years before Mr. Morley and Mr. Bryce visited us last, was struck by the fact—and by the many consequences of the fact—that "America is the only land on earth where caste has never had a footing, nor has left a trace." It seemed to him that "vast numbers and the passion of equality tend to low averages in thought, in manners and in public opinion, which the zeal of the devoted minority tends gradually to raise to higher planes of thought and conduct." But he believed we should solve our problems one by one because "the zeal for learning, justice and humanity" lies deep in the American heart. Mr. Harrison did not say it in so many words, but it is implied in what he did say, that the absence of caste and the presence of low averages in thought, in manners and in public opinion impose a heavier task on the devoted minority, whose duty it is to keep burning steadily the zeal for learning, justice and humanity.

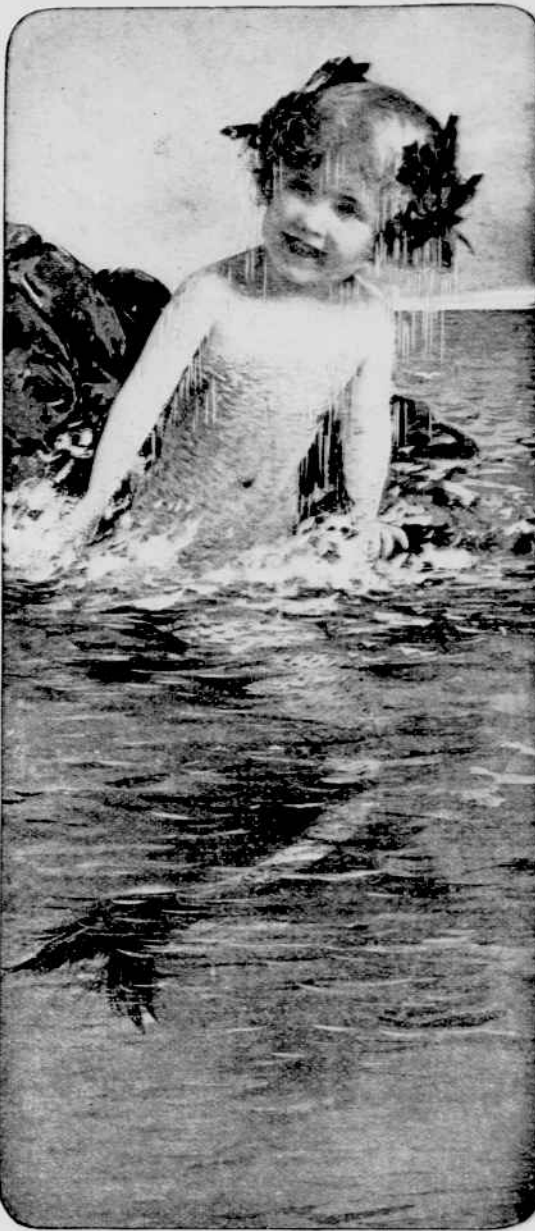
Which of us may not, if haply the spirit moves him, elect himself to this devoted minority? Why should not we also, each in our own way, without pretense, without boastfulness, without bullying, do whatsoever in us lies for the attainment of justice and of virtue? It is well to be a gentleman and a scholar; but after all it is best to be a man, ready to do a man's

work in the world. And indeed there is no reason why a man should not be also a gentleman and a scholar. He will need to cherish what Huxley called "that enthusiasm for truth, that fanaticism for veracity, which is a greater possession than much learning, a nobler gift than the power of increasing knowledge." He will need also to remember that

Kings have their dynasties—but not the mind;  
Caesar leaves other Caesars to succeed,  
But Wisdom, dying, leaves no heir behind.  
THE END

## THE MERMAID

Illustration by William Schmedtgen



By S. E. Kiser

The mermaid cannot skip the rope—  
You'll see why at a glance—  
She cannot ride astride, or hope  
To ever learn to dance.  
Her stockings good old Santa Claus  
May not expect to find;  
But she will never fret because  
Her skirt hangs wrong behind.

The mermaid cannot learn to go  
On roller-skates, or stray  
Through pastures where wild roses blow  
And frisky lambkins play;

Her case is very sad, and yet  
It might be worse by far;  
We know that she will never get  
Off backward from a car.

The mermaid cannot promenade  
Along the avenue,  
Or ever stroll in pathways made  
Just wide enough for two.

The mermaid cannot run to meet  
Her love; but, after all,  
She'll never have to pinch her feet  
In shoes a size too small